

By the Shuttle Train

By NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

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Varied and multiple as the summer sands are the means which the fates presiding over love affairs employ to bring the one man and the one woman together.

It was the shuttle train that has its terminus at the Fifty-eighth street elevated station, where Sixth avenue ends its devious journey past wholesale warehouses and small shops and department stores, with a brief dip into the gayeties of theaters and dance halls in the frivolous Thirties, and Central park begins its spreading progress through the city's heart, that brought about the determining moment in the lives of Madge Rowan and John Cleverley.

The interference of this particular agent was the more remarkable because the lives of the two persons most concerned with it had till a few months before been lived more than 2,000 miles away.

It was in February that the pretty daughter of the most prosperous physician in a thriving Colorado town had bidden a tearful farewell to the fond father and mother who had at last acquiesced in her desire to go east to develop her artistic talent.

The talent found its chief expression in fluffy impossibilities masquerading as Easter chickens and other seasonal novelties, with which she decorated menu cards, to the infinite admiration of her many friends.

Her art, therefore, had brought her to New York. And it was art, likewise hers, that had brought John Cleverley. For, though the two had been boy and girl sweethearts together, the sudden development of Miss Rowan's artistic genius had apparently absorbed all her sentimental impulses, and before leaving Colorado she had told Cleverley that she could never marry him.

She had not been a month in town before the young man made his appearance at her Fifty-eighth street studio with a more or less plausible story of having been sent east by his firm to look up an important case.

Art had languished during that first month, when visits to unsympathetic dealers had convinced Miss Rowan of the dearth of the demand for dinner cards, and the cordiality of the auburn-haired, paint bespattered vision that greeted Cleverley when he climbed the five flights to her studio augured well for his hope of taking her back with him to Colorado. But the day after his arrival she had actually succeeded in selling a dozen menu cards, and again Cupid drooped his diminished head under Art's overshadowing wing.

So furiously did Miss Rowan apply herself to her profession under the impetus that it was only after much persuasion that she consented to spend an afternoon at the beach the Saturday after Cleverley's arrival.

"You know, Jack," she had said, "you haven't the responsibilities that I have. It is natural for you to want to go about and see things, but I've just started a new pond-lily menu series, and I must have it finished tomorrow night. And the studio must be cleaned tomorrow afternoon anyway."

But as Cleverley looked unconvinced and rueful she added contritely: "Well, I'll go this once. But don't you come here, for everything will be in such a mess. I'll meet you at the Fifty-eighth street elevated station at 3 o'clock."

And to this arrangement, after some argument, Cleverley was forced to acquiesce.

On Saturday the fact that she knew she would have to refuse Jack Cleverley for the last time lent a pleasing melancholy to Miss Rowan's preparations for the afternoon. As a concession to Cleverley she determined to wear the rather barbaric necklace of topazes and Cripple Creek gold which had been his last birthday offering to her, and she therefore sought it in the little jewel box, which had not been taken from its place of concealment in the bottom of her trunk since her arrival in New York.

Her surprise when she discovered, after a search that was at first perfunctory, then earnest and finally frantic, that it and, indeed, all her jewels were gone was a splendid testimonial to her belief in her adopted city.

But fact, relentless, immutable, must ever triumph over illusion, and in fifteen minutes Miss Rowan had realized that all the pretty little trinkets she had collected since infancy had indeed been stolen. In the face of such unforeseen disaster she stood alone, inexperienced, in a strange city. And for a young woman in the full enjoyment of an independent career her first thought was a singularly impracticable one—she must tell John Cleverley all about it, and he would get them back!

But first she would summon the landlady, the stout person inhabiting unpenetrated depths below, who called so regularly to collect the rent, and declare her loss. There was a theory that this mysterious person might be reached by bell and speaking tube. But ten minutes of frenzied blowing and ringing sent Miss Rowan plunging down the five flights to the basement for more tangible consolation than the mocking silence which answered her affording.

Now, Miss Rowan's landlady—whose landlady does not—played the races. And she generally lost. When Miss Rowan confronted her with the tale of

her stolen jewelry she had lost very heavily on the first race.

As a result in the next five minutes Miss Rowan learned what she had never doubted, that Mrs. O'Brien kept a "respectable house," that her colored maid, engaged the day before without references, was the "most honest and God fearing woman she had ever known" and a "perfect lady," that no jewels had been stolen, that investigation would doubtless show that if they had really disappeared Miss Rowan herself had "pawned" them, and that if she dared cast such an aspersion upon an honest widow trying to make a respectable living all the reporters in New York would be called in and she would rue the day that she and her worthless truck ever came out of Colorado.

Under this onslaught, which she was not experienced enough to trace to its dubious origin, poor little Miss Rowan blushed, wilted, and finally rushed from the house. And it was only after she had walked several bewildered blocks that she awoke to the realization of her appointment with John Cleverley at 3 o'clock. A glance at her watch told her that it was already ten minutes after the hour, and she hastened her steps, more with the idea of at once unburdening herself of her troubles than with an attempt at punctuality. As she turned up Sixth avenue she was surprised to notice a dense crowd gathered at the terminus of the elevated structure. But, following their uplifted gaze, her pulses halting tensely at the sight that met her eyes. Slanted toboggan fashion from the terminus of the Fifty-eighth street track the wrech of what had been the rear car of the shuttle train topped portentously in midair, prevented from plunging into the thoroughfare below by the weight of the other cars that still held it to the track.

The wreck of the large frame bumper at the end of the line lay strewn along the trolley tracks below, and under the suspended peril 500 yelling excited people surged and clamored. For one moment Miss Rowan did not grasp the significance of the scene.

But the next, the hour, the possible significance of the event to her smote her with sudden alarm. What if John Cleverley had been on board that train? No thought of any other victim of the wreck marred the pure selfishness of the sudden fierce awakening of love in her heart. With blanched face and wide, excited eyes she rushed into the crowd.

"What is the matter? When did it happen?" she gasped at the first curious onlooker that barred her progress.

"Train jumped the track. Shot past the station. Broke over the bumper. Fifty people injured. Roosevelt hospital," he explained, with terse importunity.

"What time?"

"Oh, around five minutes to 3 o'clock."

And thus was the last doubt in the young woman's excited mind dispelled.

The image of Cleverley injured, bleeding—dead, perhaps—rose suddenly and was as suddenly blurred by the quick blinding rush of tears. Scarcely knowing what she did, she jumped into a hansom and gave a brief direction to Roosevelt hospital.

Then, leaning back against the cushions, wholly oblivious of the frankly staring pedestrians on the avenue, all the newly awakened emotions of her nature found their outlet in passionate sobbing. What happened in the next hour, thronged with visits to hospitals and police stations, with frantic telephone calls to Cleverley's hotel, and to his address in a downtown office, Miss Rowan does not remember to this day, for at the end of the search, when she thought that only the morgue lay unexplored and she plunged despairingly up the five long flights that led to her studio, it was all blotted out by one luminous incident—the opening of the studio door by Cleverley himself.

Even Cleverley admits that what she said then doesn't matter. It is doubtful if she knows, but he had never explained anything to Madge Rowan, with her two arms about his neck and her cheek warm and wet against his own, before, and his remembrance is naturally blurred.

"Why, of course I was on that train," he explained, "but I got off at Fifty-eighth street station with all the other passengers. It was only in switching for the downtown trip that the rear car backed against the bumper and the rotten wood gave way and toppled the car over. Some of the train hands were hurt, but—why, good little girl, you poor little girl—don't!" For Madge was sobbing passionate relief upon his shoulder.

Then quietly, when he had calmed her, she told him the story of the afternoon, beginning with the lost necklace and ending with her wild ride in search of him, and at the end she said shyly, humbly:

"You didn't know I was such a little fool, did you?"

And Cleverley, bending over her, kissed the warm tears from her drooping lashes.

"I always hoped you were," he murmured.

Olden Time Couriers.

Carrying messages in olden times called for much ingenuity. "Nothing in the world," wrote Herodotus, "is done so swiftly as messages by the Persian couriers." They had over a hundred stations, each a day's journey from the other, and a regular service of riders carried messages to and fro at the rate of from sixty to a hundred miles a day. They had their "through couriers," too, for in the case of a specially confidential message the text was tattooed upon the shaven head of a man, whose hair was allowed to grow before he began his journey, so that his letter might be concealed until he reached his goal, where, of course, he would be resharpened.

Now, Miss Rowan's landlady—whose

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TWO ALPHABET LETTERS.

"J" and "W" Comparatively Recent Additions to the List.

It is a fact, not so well known but that it may be said to be curious, that the letters J and W are modern additions to our alphabet. The letter J only came into general use during the time of the Commonwealth, say between 1640 and 1658. From 1630 its use is exceedingly rare, and I have never yet seen a book printed prior to 1652 in which it appeared.

In the century immediately preceding the seventeenth it became the fashion to tail the last i when Roman numerals were used, as in this example, viij for 8 or xij in place of 12. This fashion still lingers, but only in physicians' prescriptions, I believe. Where the French use j it has the power of s as we use it in the word "vision." What nation was the first to use it as a new letter is an interesting but perhaps unanswered query.

In a like manner the printers and language makers of the latter part of the sixteenth century began to recognize the fact that there was a sound in spoken English which was without a representative in the shape of an alphabetical sign or character, as in the first sound in the word "wet."

Prior to that time it had always been spelled as "vet," the v having the long sound of u or of two u's together.

In order to convey an idea of the new sound they began to spell such words as "wet," "weather," "web," etc., with two w's, and as the u of that date was a typical v the three words above looked like this: "Vvet," "vveather," "vvelb."

After awhile the typefounders recognized the fact that the double u had come to stay, so they joined the two u's together and made the character now so well known as w. I have one book in which three forms of the w are given. The first is an old double v (vv); the next is one in which the last stroke of the first v crosses the first stroke of the second, and the third is the common w we use today.—New York News.

GREAT VOYAGERS.

As a General Rule, They Came From the Smaller Countries.

Portugal is a smaller country, with a land area one-third less than the state of New York, but it has turned out in its time celebrated navigators, Cabral and Da Souza among them.

It is a somewhat peculiar circumstance in the history of ocean navigation that the chief navigators of Europe have usually been natives of minor kingdoms and without the advantages which would naturally accrue to a representative of one of the larger governments.

Christopher Columbus, as every schoolboy knows, was a native of Genoa, at the time when the Italian peninsula was subdivided among numerous petty governments. John Cabot was a Venetian, who sailed in the service of England, as Columbus had sailed originally in the service of Spain and afterward transferred himself to the Portuguese service and then went back to the Spanish service for a second time.

Vitus Bering, after whom Bering strait was called, was a Dane by birth, who served under the naval flag of Russia. Magellan, after whom Magellan strait was named, was a native of Alemano, in Portugal, and was the first to complete the circumnavigation of the globe, in 1522.

Verazzani was a Florentine, whose voyages of discovery were undertaken under the protection of the flag of France. Hendrik Hudson was an Englishman, and it seems surprising to many persons in this day familiar with the pre-eminence of England as a maritime nation that he should have been in the service of the government of Holland when he discovered Manhattan Island.

BOTTLES.

Ancient bottles of glass, stone and metal have been found in many parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. Perfume bottles of glass have been discovered in great numbers in the tombs of wealthy ladies of Egypt. Many bottles, tumblers and other drinking vessels have been dug from the ruins of Pompeii. The most common bottle of the ancients, however, was of leather, the skin of a calf, goat or ox being taken off the carcass with as few cuts as possible and made into a receptacle for holding water or wine. The largest glass bottle ever blown was made at Leith, in Scotland, in 1747-48. Its capacity was two hogsheads.

Bad Habit.

"So you lose your position?" we ask of our young friend, who has demanded our sympathy.

"Yes: the firm told me I would have to quit."

"What reason was given?"